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The Influence of Ben Jonson on Restoration Drama

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THE INFLUENCE OF BEN JONSON

ON

RESTORATION DRAMA

BY

EMERSON GRANT SUTCLIFFE

A. B. Harvard

1911

THESIS

Submited in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN ENGLISH

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1914

1914
Su8

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

June 5 1914

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Emerson Grant Sutcliffe

ENTITLED The Influence of Ben Jonson on Restoration Drama

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

Edward Chauncey Baldwin
In Charge of Major Work

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Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:

Committee
on
Final Examination

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INTRODUCTION

The first problem which an investigator of Restoration drama must face is the question of influences. It is immediately evident that these influences are international,— French and Spanish as well as native. The French influence is apparent in two ways. In the first place, the neo-classical tragedies of Corneille and Racine and the romances of de Scudéry and La Calprenède are chiefly responsible for the heroic plays of Dryden and his followers. In the second place, the comedies of Molière furnish models for the wit and involved incident which distinguish the plays of Etheredge, Wycherley, Congreve, and many others. The Spanish influence, not so important as the French, displays itself in the disguises, trap-doors, and assignations suggested to Crowne, Afra Behn, and others by the plays of Moreto and Calderon. The most important element of the native influence, the most important, indeed, of all influences, native and foreign, is the spirit of the age,—an age of two ruling passions: the desire to be witty and the desire to carry on amorous intrigue. Restoration drama, especially Restoration comedy, is, even more than most literature, a product of its time. This fact above all we should keep before us in our attempt to trace the other chief native influence, that of Ben Jonson.

Many performances of Jonson's plays between 1660 and 1682, and the favor with which he was regarded by public and critics during those years would seem to make a strong Jonsonian

influence almost inevitable. In the pages following, however, I shall endeavor to show that, though performances of his plays were numerous and his popularity was great, Jonson's influence was not very extensive, nor, except in one way, very important. Jonson's incident, characters, in some cases even expression are borrowed or imitated; his example is followed in the inclusion of character-sketches within the plays and in the dramatis personae; his authority is invoked in an attempt to excuse and support practices already favored by the playgoers of thee time. The Jonsonian influence is strongest on Shadwell, avowed writer of' humour' comedy. In a controversy between Shadwell and Dryden, the one supporting the comedy of 'humour', the other that of 'wit' and 'repartee', we see the crisis of the controversy which marks the actual transition from the comedy of Jonson to the comedy of Molière. But even when, in the later Restoration comedy, the change seems complete, and we can distinguish nothing Jonsonian clearly, we can discover, I believe, something Jonsonian, something based on the 'humour' idea, though not strictly 'humour' itself. The change from the comedy of 'humour' to the comedy of 'wit', with the retention of this almost indistinguishably Jonsonian conception of character, is highly important because of the part played by the change in the history of character-portrayal, both in the drama and in the novel.

RESTORATION PERFORMANCES OF JONSON'S PLAYS

RESTORATION CRITICISM OF JONSON

First to be considered are the performances of Jonson's plays in the Restoration period. Geneste[1] mentions among 21 old plays revived between 1663 and 16682: The Widow, The Devil is an Ass; Every Man in his Humour,"revived with a good epilogue"; Every Man out of his Humour,"1675, with a new prologue and epilogue"; and Sejanus. Geneste also[2] quotes Downes as authority for believing that Bartholomew Fair was revived in 1682. Up to 1670, however, Geneste depends mostly on Pepys.

Pepys is a more fruitful source, not only for information about the number of revivals and the plays revived, but also for his criticism of the plays, a criticism which we may feel fairly sure, unless Pepys is much more independent in his judgment here than elsewhere, represents the general opinion of the audiences of the time, at least of those connected with the court, by whom, of course, the theatre was controlled.It seems worth while, therefore, to subjoin a chronological series of quotations from Pepys which relate to Jonson. These quotations establish beyond a doubt, even if there were no other evidence, that (1)Jonson's plays were revived many times between 1660 and 1670; (2) one busy man thought reading Jonson no waste of time; (3) the king and court,and apparently playgoers generally, liked Jonson's plays hugely.

(1) December 4, 1660--"to see the Silent Woman."

(2) May 25, 1661--"I saw a piece of the Silent

1-Some Account of the English Stage, pp.342-4. 2-Ibid:p. 402.

Woman which pleased me."

(3) June 8, 1661-- "Saw Bartholomew Faire, the first time it was acted now-a-days. It is a most admirable play and well acted, but too much prophane and abusive."

(4) June 22, 1661-- "Then to the theatre, the Alchymist, which is a most incomparable play."

(5) June 27, 1661-- "Saw Bartholomew Fayre acted very well."

(6) August 14, 1661-- "saw the Alchymist."

(7) September 7, 1661-- "And here was Bartholomew Fayre with the puppet-show, acted to-day, which had not been these forty years[1] (it being so satyricall against Puritanism, they durst not till now, which is strange they should already dare to do it, and the king do countenance it) but I do never a whit like it the better for the puppets, but rather the worse."

(8) November 12, 1661-- "To Bartholomew Fayre with puppets which I had seen once before, and the play without puppets often, but though I love theplay as much as much as ever I did, yet I do not like the puppets at all, but I think it to be a lessening to it."

(9) July 22, 1663-- "So down to Deptford reading Ben Jonson's Devil is an Ass."

(10) August 2, 1664-- "Saw Bartholomew Fayre, which do still please me; and is as it is acted, the best comedy in

1--The puppet-show is evidently referred to here, not the play: see the previous and following quotations.

the world, Ibelieve."

(11) August 4, 1664-- "Here we hear that Clun, one of their best actors, was, the other night, going out of towne (after he had acted the Alchymist, wherein was one of the best parts that he acts) x x set upon and murdered."

(12) December 18, 1664-- "To my chamber to read Ben Jonson's Cataline, a very excellent piece."

(13) January 14, 1665--"To see Vulpone, a most excellent play; the best I think I ever saw, and well acted."

(14) February 9, 1667--"Read a piece of a play, Every Man in his Humour, wherein is the greatest propriety of speech that ever I read in my life."

(15) April 16, 1667-- "I never was more taken with a play than I am with this Silent Woman, as old as it is, and as often as I have seen it."

(16) December 7, 1667-- "Catelin is likely to be soon acted, which I am glad to hear."

(17) December 11, 1667--"There we talked of many things, and particularly of Catiline, which is to be suddenly acted at the King's House; and there all agree that it cannot be well done at that house, there not being good actors enow."

(18) January 12, 1668--"Catelin, which she thinks for want of the clothes which the king promised them, will not be acted for a good while."

(19) September 18, 1668-- "Saw the Silent Woman; the best comedy, I think, that ever was wrote; and sitting by Shadwell the poet, he was big with admiration of it."

(20) December 19, 1668-- "Saw Catiline's Conspiracy, yesterday being the first day: a play of much good sense and words to read, but that do appear the worst upon the stage, I mean least diverting , that ever I saw any, though most fine in clothes, and a fine scene in the Senate, and of a fight, that ever I saw in my life. But the play is only to be read, and therefore home with no pleasure at all."

(21) February 22, 1669--"They begun Bartholomew Fayre."

From the foregoing list of Pepys's quotations[1] I have omitted two further references to Jonson. These it seems more convenient to mention here in a list of allusions to Jonson's plays, allusions, it is to be observed, not made by imitators of Jonson. These allusions I cite to prove, what might perhaps be taken for granted, that Jonson's more familiar comedies were so well known as a result of frequent stage presentation that allusions to be understood in the twentieth century only by the student of Jonson were in the seventeenth matter for such every-day jesting as that, for instance, about marital and quasi-marital relations.

(1) December 27, 1666-- "Doll Common doing Abigail most excellently"-- a quotation to be coupled with: January 15, 1669, "It is about my Lady Harvy's being offended at Doll Common's acting of Sempronia, to imitate her."[2]

1-Wheatley's edition. 2-Doll= Mrs. Corey, who according to Downes played Doll Common in the Alchymist and Sempronia in Cataline's Conspiracy.

(2) July 30, 1667-- "But it is a pretty thing he told us how the King, once speaking of the Duke of York's being mastered by his wife, said to some of the company by, that he would go no more abroad with this Tom Otter (meaning the Duke of York) and his wife. Tom Killigrew, being by, answered, "Sir," says he, "pray which is the best for a man, to be a Tom Otter to his wife or to his mistress?" meaning the king's being so to my Lady Castlemaine." [1]

(3) A third allusion is to be found with Crowne's play City Politicks (1683?) in To the Reader: "Is it possible I should be such a Bartholomew-Cokes, to pull out my purse in a fair, and as soon as ever a knave tickled my ear with a straw--a little silly flattery-- I should let go my discretion and perhaps my fortune?" [2]

(4)Afourth allusion is found in the prologue to the Country Wife (1672-74) : "And, ere you speak, like Castril give the lie." [3]

(5) Nicholson and Herford's Ben Jonson in the Mermaid Series repeats from Gifford's [4] notes the following: "To this comedy (Bartholomew Fair), Collin, the rustic champion of Puritanism, is taken, on his visit to London, and D'Urfey

1-Otter is, of course, the hen-pecked husband in Epicene. See Act II, Sc.1. 2-See Bartholomew Fair, Act III, Sc.1. 3-The reference is, of course, to the Alchemist. 4-The Works of Ben Jonson.

gives a humorous account of his zeal and fury at the scenical disgrace of Rabbi Busy. D'Urfey pays an incidental compliment to this piece, by representing Collin as completely deceived at first, and believing that what he saw and heard of the Puritans was a scene of real life." [1]

In a period when the influence of the critics was far less than that of the king, a record of stage presentations of Jonson's plays is perhaps of more importance than the opinions of contemporary writers of dramatic criticism. Yet it is necessary to consider what these opinions were. In the first place, as the heat of some of the criticisms shows, criticism did have a direct influence on the drama. In the second place, since the criticism must in return have been influenced by contemporary taste, it will give us some hints of what playwrights would be likely to provide to satisfy their audiences. The critics, it will be noticed, admire Jonson for his art-- as distinguished from nature-- his 'judgment', his humor, his plot-construction, and his observance of Aristotelian rules. They do not like some of his violations of these rules and his description of types so low that he seems to be playing the buffoon . Yet praise, certainly, far outweighs blame.

Richard Flecknoe, in A Short Discourse of the English Stage [2] (1664) has the following comments on Jonson: "For playes, Shakespear was one of the first who inverted the

1-Collin's Walk, London, 1690:cited by Langbaine. 2- Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century;edited by J.E. Spingarn: Vol.I, pp.92, 94.

dramatick stile from dull history to quick comedy, upon whom Johnson refin'd." "Johnson (excelled) in gravity and ponderousness of style, whose onely fault was he was too elaborate, and had he mixt less erudition with his playes, they had been more pleasant and delightful than they are. Comparing him with Shakespeare, you shall see the difference between nature and art; and with Fletcher, the difference between wit and judgement: art being an exuberant thing, like Nilus, never more commendable than when it overflows; but judgment, a stayed and reposed thing, always containing it self within its bounds and limits."

In 1665, Sir Robert Howard in his Preface to Four New Plays[1] has these complimentaryremarks: "..... in Terence and Plautus for the Comical, in which latter we see some references to plots, though certainly short of what we have seen in Mr. Johnson's plays." "..... our best poets have differed from other nations (though not so happily) in usually mingling and interweaving mirth and sadness through the whole course of their plays, Ben. Johnson only excepted, who keeps himself entire to one argument; and I am now convinc'd that it is most proper to keep the audience in one entire disposition both of concern and attention." "Mr. Johnson's never to be equal'd comedies."

Rymer, out-and-out classicist, admires Jonson but does not hesitate to pick flaws: "It was then a strange imagination in Ben.Johnson, to go stuff out a play with Tully's

1-Spingarn: Vol.I,pp. 98, 100, 104.

orations." [1] "Ben Jonson's Alchymist gives some shadow of his (Aristophanes') Clouds."[2] After censuring Shakespeare for introducing into tragedy, in defiance of Aristotle, such inconsiderable and unimportant characters as Iago, Roderigo, and Cassio, Rymer goes on :[3] "Ben. Johnson knew to distinguish men and manners at another rate. In Catiline we find our selves in Europe, we are no longer in the land of savages, amongst blackamoors, barbarians, and monsters. The scene is Rome and first on the stage appears Sylla's ghost.

Dost thou not feel me, Rome ? not yet?

One would, in reason, imagine the ghost is in some publick open place, upon some eminence, where Rome is all within his view: But it is a surprising thing to find that this ratling, rodomontado speech is in a dark, close, private sleeping hole of Catiline's. Yet the chorus, is of all wonders the strangest. The chorus is always present on the stage, privy to, and interessed in all that passes, and thereupon make their reflections to conclude the several acts. Sylla's ghost, tho' never so big, might slide in at the key-hole; but how comes the chorus into Catilins cabinet? Aurelia is soon after with him too, but the poet had perhaps provided her some truckle-bed in a dark closet by him. In short it is strange that Ben, who understood the turn of comedy so well; and had found the success, should thus grope in the dark, and jumble things together without head

1-T. Rymer: A Short View of Tragedy, p.6. 2-Ibid, p.24. 3-Ibid, pp.159-163.

or tail, without any rule or proportion, without any reason or design. Might not the Acts of the Apostles, or a life in Plutarch, be as well acted, and as properly called a tragedy, as any history of a conspiracy? What is there material in this Catiline which is not word for word translation? Vile, Horace calls it..... For Ben, to sin thus against the clearest light and conviction, argues a strange stupidity. It was bad enough in him, against his judgment and conscience, to interlard so much fiddle-faddle, comedy, and apocryphal matters in the history."

That constant discoverer of plagiarism, Gerard Langbaine, defends Jonson from Dryden's charge of plagiarism in these words:" If in imitation of these illustrious examples, and models of antiquity, he has borrow'd from them, as they from each other; yet that he attempted, and, as some think, happily succeeded in his endeavours of surpassing them."[1] At the beginning of his account of Jonson he says: "I have already drawn some strokes of this great man's character, in my defence of him against the attempts of Mr. Dryden; and therefore shall less need to make a curious and exact description of all his excellencies, which otherwise are very great, noble, and various; and have been remarked in parcells by several hands."[2]

Dennis's opinions of Jonson are thus summed up by Professor H. G. Paul:[3] "Dennis ranked Shakespeare's tragedies far above those by Jonson. In fact, though Dennis had a high

1-An Account of the English Dramatick Poets:p.145. 2- Ibid, p.281. 3- John Dennis His Life and Criticism,pp188-189.

respect for Jonson's critical learning, especially for his Discoveries, which he occasionally quoted, he repeatedly declared that the great Ben had no right notion of tragedy,[1] for he had often failed to move terror and pity and consequently had fallen far below the ancients. But along with Rymer and Drydeh, with Gildon and Addison, and a host of other critics of the day, he was loud in his praise of Jonson's comedies. In common with these critics Dennis affirmed the belief that Jonson had carried away the palm of comedy from both the ancients and the moderns and had done so in spite of occasional stooping to play the buffoon. St. Evremond was largely responsible for this praise of Jonson by the critics, and in a measure for their attitude toward comedy-- the exaltation of the ridiculum which caused Dennis and his age to place Jonson's comedies far above Shakspere's. According to our critic Jonson's work is distinguished by its humor and plot management, more especially by the former, which strengthened his observance of the ridiculum.

1-For some interesting parallel passages between Sejanus and two Restoration tragedies, the anonymous Unfortunate Usurper and J. Wilson's Andronicus Comnenius, both printed in 1664, see Anglia, 1912, Vol.XXV (New: Vol. XXIII) p.277: The Influence of Jonson's Tragedy in the Seventeenth Century by W. D. Briggs. The other examples of parallelism are from pre-Restoration tragedies, with the exception of a line or two from Southerne's Fate of Capua.

Dennis criticized the Volpone and the Alchemist, which he ranked among the best of Jonson's comedies, on the ground "That the intrigue seems more dextrously perplexed than happily disentangled"; but the management of the Silent Woman he considered so admirable that it should rank as the best English comedy. Dennis shows for Jonson, however, little of the enthusiastic appreciation which he bestows upon Shakspere; and he criticizes Ben for failing to"arouse passion", "to touch the heart"."

Gildon's admiration, referred to in the preceding quotation, is summed up in these words:[1] "......there (in all of Jonson's comedies) nature is followed so close we take the picture to be the life."

These quotations from the critics, combined with the evidence of Jonson's popularity which we have found in Geneste's and Pepys's record of Jonsonian revivals, should be sufficient to indicate that Jonson could scarcely fail to have some influence on Restoration drama.

1-A Comparison between the Two Stages, p.146. The same work contains a discussion of the use of puns, a discussion which seems to have interested the latter seventeenth century critics: "Ben himself took singular delight in playing with ... words." Cf. Familiar Letters, Vol. I, p.145, apparently by Dennis:"If there be any diversion in quibbling, it is a diversion of which a fool and a porter is as capable as is the best of you. And, therefore, Ben. Johnson, who writ everything with judgment, and who knew the scum of the people, whenever he brings in a porter or a tankard-bearer, is sure to introduce him quibbling."

THE TRANSITION FROM THE COMEDY OF 'HUMOUR' TO THE COMEDY OF WIT'

None of the critics just quoted wrote plays which much affected the course of Restoration drama. Three dramatists of the period—Dryden, Shadwell, and Congreve—did, however, write criticism, in which we may see in conflict the Jonsonian comedy of 'humours' and the comedy of 'wit' and 'repartee'. Congreve, the last of these dramatists, is chiefly interesting for his remarks on the nature of humour, remarks which, together with others on the same subject by Dryden and Shadwell, it seems more convenient to postpone. It should be said here, however, before considering the Jonsonian influence on Dryden and Shadwell and the critical controversy between them, that "in the evolution of the term (humour) from its older to its modern meaning, the early stages of the controversy between Shadwell and Dryden represent perhaps the crisis." Here Spingarn suggests, [1] I believe, the chief value of a study of the Jonsonian influence on Restoration drama. That, it seems to me, is the tracing of the development of the word 'humour' to its modern meaning, the 'humour', for example, of Tom Jones, and the effect of the change in meaning of that word on the development of character delineation.

Dryden himself began as an imitator of Jonson, a fact which he admits in the prologue to Secret Love or the Maiden Queen (1668) :

"He who wrote this, not without pains and thought
From French and English theatres has brought

1- J.E. Spingarn: Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, p.LXIII.

The exactest rules, by which a play is wrought;
The unities of action, place, and time;
The scenes unbroken; and a mingled chime
Of Jonson's humour, with Corneille's rhyme.
But while dead colours he with care did lay,
He fears his wit or plot he did not weigh,
Which are the living beauties of a play."

In the Wild Gallant(1664), says Scott[1], "the character of Trice, at least his whimsical humour of drinking, playing at dice by himself, and quarreling as if engaged with a successful gamester, is imitated from the character of Carlo in Jonson's Every Man out of his Humour[2] who drinks with a supposed companion, quarrels about the pledge, and tosses about the cups and flasks in the imaginary brawl". [3] Another Jonsonian convention, that of describing the 'humour' of another character in the play immediately before his appearance, is of course an easy method of exposition, and is perhaps for that reason employed by Dryden twice in ActI, Scene 1 of this play:

(1)

"Failer. Do you not know Will Bibber's humour?
Burr. Pr'ythee, what have I to do with his humour?
Failer. Break but a jest, and he'll beg to trust thee for a suit: nay he will contribute to his own destruction, and give thee occasions to make

1-The Works of John Dryden, Vol.II, p.16. 2-Act V, Sc. 4.

3-Mentioned also by Whalley and Gifford.

one. He has been my artificer these three years; and, all the while I have lived upon his favourable apprehension."

"Bibber. There's a great dinner to be made here, at your cousin Trice's, on purpose for the interview.

(2) Burr. What, he keeps up his old humour still?

Failer. Yes, certain; he admires eating and drinking well, as much as ever, and measures every man's wit by the goodness of his palate."

It is interesting to compare these two passages with the following paragraph from the Essay on Dramatick Poesy: "There is another artifice of the poet, which I cannot here omit, because by the frequent practice of it in his comedies he has left it to us almost as a rule; that is, when he has any character of humour wherein he would show a coup de Maistre, or his highest skill, he recommends it to your observation by a pleasant description of it before the person first appears. Thus, in Bartholomew Fair he gives you the pictures of Numps and Cokes, and in this (the Silent Woman) those of Daw, Lafoole, Morose, and the Collegiate Ladies; all of which you hear described before you see them. So that before they come upon the stage, you have a longing expectation of them, which prepares you to receive them favorably; and when they are there, even from their first appearance you are so acquainted with them, that nothing of their humour is lost to you." In the Dramatis Personae of Secret Love

Lord Nonsuch is described as an old rich humorous lord. The play as a whole, however, is not a comedy of humours, but a Spanish tale of amorous pursuit.

In 1668, the same year in which appeared the prologue cited above and the Essay of Dramatick Poesy, both indicating that Dryden with his usual feeling for popular taste was about to begin the writing of a new style of drama, there appeared a play usually marked by Spanish influence, An Evening's Love. Aurelia, however, one of the characters in this play, is a typical Jonsonian 'humour' character[1] in her fondness for Latinized English, for synonyms, and for the word 'furiously'.

In leaving behind Jonsonian comedy, moreover, Dryden did not scruple in the Essay of Dramatick Poesy to make use of Jonson's example as a justification of the use of heroic couplets in the drama:"I can shew...many scenes of rhyme together in Ben Johnsons tragedies:in Catiline and Sejanus sometimes thirty or forty lines,...I mean besides the chorus,or the monologues; which,by the way, shewed Ben no enemy to this way of writing,especially if you read his Sad Shepherd, which

1-D.H. Miles, the Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy, p.63. 2-For a similar justification, this time of the use of songs in the drama, see Gildon's Comparison of the Two Stages, pp.52-53, where after Sullen has said that we had 'em (songs) from Italy," and "Chagrin, a critick", has said that "this error of musick is not yesterdays invention:old Ben, with allhis exactness stumbles here sometimes," Rambler answers:"Your example of Ben is enough to justifie this practicein some men's opinion."

goes sometimes on rhyme, sometimes on blank verse, like an horse who eases himself on trot and amble. You find him likewise commending Fletcher's pastoral of the Faithful Shepherdess, which is for the most part rhyme."

In the same essay, furthermore, Dryden commends Jonson for his variety of humors, in contrast with the single humour usually found in the Spanish plays; declares that his comedies, especially for plot construction, compare to England's advantage with French comedy; and mentions the fact that Jonson was "not only a professed imitator of Horace, but a learned plagiary of all the others" (classical writers). On the other hand, that passage which is most often quoted, Dryden's'character' of Jonson, and comparison of Jonson with Shakespeare, contains, as do two or three other Jonsonian references, a mingling of praise and blame. To Dryden's fault-finding, Shadwell, professed imitator of Jonson and writer of 'humour' comedy, took exception strongly in prefaces, prologues, and epilogues, referring sometimes respectfully and sometimes ironically to Dryden's comments and plays. To understand the controversy thoroughly we must have the passages to which Shadwell refers.

"As for Johnson, ... if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages) I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was lacking to the drama till

he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully Humour was h is proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanick people If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too loosely and laboriously, in his comedies especially; perhaps, too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatick poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare."

To be joined with the reference to Jonson's representation of "mechanick people" is the comment in regard to the Silent Woman: "Besides that he has here described the conversation of gentlemen in the persons of True-Wit and his friends, with more gaiety, air, and freedom, than in the rest of his comedies." To be compared with this, moreover, are these lines from the Conquest of Granada, of which the Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age was a defence:

"Thus Jonson did mechanick humour show.
When men were dull, and conversation low,
Then comedy was faultless, but 'twas coarse;
Cobb's tankard was a jest, and Otter's horse."

Finally, Dryden is most courageous in his advocacy of a new drama and in the avowal of his belief that the older

writers are at least no better than the moderns, each in his own style, when he writes thus: "Not only we shall never equal them, but they could never equal themselves, were they to rise and write again. We acknowledge them our fathers in wit; but they have ruined their estates themselves before they came to their children's hands. There is scarce an humour, a character, or any kind of plot, which they have not used. ... This therefore will be a good argument to us, either not to write at all, or to attempt some other way."

In 1668, the year when the Essay was published, appeared Shadwell's first play, the Sullen Lovers; or the Curious Impertinents, and with it the first faint indications of that dramatic rivalry and support of different kinds of comedy which was to lead, through the Medal of John Bayes, to Macflecknoe.[1] "I have endeavoured," says Shadwell in the preface, to represent variety of humours which was the practice of Ben Jonson whom I think all dramatick poets ought to imitate. Most other authors, that I ever read, either have wild romantic tales, wherein they strain love and honour to that ridiculous height that it becomes burlesque; or in their lower comedies content themselves with one or two humours at most, and those not near such perfect characters as the admirable Jonson always made, who never wrote comedy without seven or eight admirable humours ... Though I have known some of late so insolent to say,[2] that Ben Jonson wrote his best plays without wit; imagining that all the wit in plays consisted in bringing two persons upon the stage

1-Scott: Dryden's Works, Vol. I, pp. 259-266. Scott shows plainly that Shadwell's bitterness towards Dryden was partly literary in origin; his evidence, however, has been neglected by modern literary historians. 2- Italics mine.

to break jests and to bob one another, which they call repartee; not considering that there is more wit and invention required in the finding out good humour, and matter proper for it, than in all their smart repartees. For in the writing of a humour, a man is confined not to swerve from the character, and obliged to say nothing but what is proper to it, but in the plays which have been wrote of late, there is no such thing as perfect character, but the two chief persons are most commonly a swearing, drinking whoring ruffian for a lover, and an impudent, ill-bred tom-rig for a mistress, and these are the fine people of the play[1]; and there is that latitude in this, that almost anything is proper for them to say. I must confess it is very ungenerous to accuse those, that modestly confess their own errors; but positive men, that justify all their faults, are common enemies, that no man ought to spare, ... always endeavouring magisterially to impose upon our understandings, against the freedom of mankind."

Dryden seems to be referred to, also, in the Prologue to the same play:

"He has
No kind romantic lovers in his play
To sigh and whine out passion, such as may
Charm waiting-women with heroic chime,
And still resolve to live and die in rhyme,
Such as your ears with love and honour feast
And play at crambo for three hours at least;

1-Italics mine.

That fight, and woo in verse in the same breath,
And make similitudes, and love in death."

The foregoing preface of Shadwell Dryden apparently had in mind in writing his own Preface to An Evening's Love , the same play in which , as has been stated (p.17) is found, contradictorily enough, Aurelia, a typically Jonsonian character: "As I pretend not that I can write humour, so none of them can reasonably pretend to have written it as they ought. Jonson was the only man, of all ages and nations, who has performed it well; and that in but three or four of his comedies: The rest are but a crabe bis cocta; the same humours a little varied and written worse. Neither was it more allowable in him, than it is in our present poets, to represent the follies of particular persons; of which many have accused him. But Ben Jonson is to be admired for many excellencies; and can be taxed with fewer failings than any English poet. I know I have been accused as an enemy of his writings but without any other reason, than that I do not admire him blindly, and without looking into his imperfections. Or why should there be any ipse dixit in our poetry, any more than there is in our philosophy? I admire him and applaud him where I ought: Those, who do more,do but value themselves in their admiration of him; and by telling you they extol Ben Jonson's way, would insinuate to you they can practise it. For my part, I declare that I want judgment to imitate him; and should think it a great impudence in myself to attempt it. To make men appear pleasantly ridiculous on the

stage, was, as I have said, his talent; and in this he needed not the acumen of wit, but that of judgment. For the characters and representations of folly are only the effects of observation; and observation is an effect of judgment. Some ingenious men, for whom I have a particular esteem, have thought that I much injured Ben Jonson, when I have not allowed his wit to be extraordinary: But they confound the notion of what is witty, with what is pleasant. That Ben Jonson's plays were pleasant, he must want reason who denies: But that pleasantness was not properly wit, or the sharpness of conceit; but the natural imitation of folly I will not deny, but that I approve most the mixed way of comedy; that which is neither all wit, nor all humour, but the result of both. Neither so little of humour as Fletcher shows, nor so little of love and wit as Jonson; neither all cheat, with which the best plays of the one are filled, nor all adventure which is the common practice of the other. But I would have more of the urbana, venusta, salsa, faceta, and the rest which Quintilian reckons up as the ornaments of wit; and these are extremely wanting in Ben Jonson. As for repartee in particular; as it is the very soul of conversation, so it is the greatest grace of comedy, where it is proper to the characters. There may be much of acuteness in a thing well said, but there is more in a quick reply. ... Of one thing I am sure, that no man ever will decry wit, but he who despairs of it himself. Some enemies of repartee have observed to us, that their is a great latitude in their characters, which are made to speak it; and that it is

easier to write wit than humour; because in the characters of humour, the poet is confined to make the person speak only what is proper to it; whereas, all kind of wit is proper in the character of a witty person. But, by their favour, there are as different characters in wit as in folly..... Jonson's Truewit in the Silent Woman is a character different from all of them. Yet it appears that this one character of wit was more difficult to the author than all his images of humour in the play; for those he could describe and manage from his observations of men; this, he has taken, at least a part of it, from books. However, if I should grant, that there were a greater latitude in characters of wit, than in those of humour; yet that latitude would be of small advantage to such poets, who have too narrow an imagination to write it. And to entertain an audience perpetually with humour, is to carry them from the conversation of gentlemen, and treat them with the follies and extravagances of Bedlam. It is charged upon me that I make debauched persons my protagonists; and that I make them happy in the conclusion of my play, against the law of comedy, which is to reward virtue, and punish vice. I answer, first, that I know no such law to have been constantly observed in comedy, either by the ancient or modern poets Ben Jonson, himself, after whom I may be proud to err, has given me more than one example of it. (Examples are here cited from the Alchemist and Silent Woman, in which latter play "Dauphine, with the other two gentlemen, is of the same character with my Celadon in the

Maiden Queen and with Wildblood in this."

In the preface to the Humourists (1671), his second play, Shadwell again refers to his master Ben, and attempts both to answer Dryden and to convert him to Jonsonian comedy: "My design was in it to reprehend some of the vices and follies of the age, which I take to be the most proper and useful way of writing comedy. I must take leave to dissent from those who seem to insinuate that the ultimate end of a poet is to delight, without correction or instruction. Mr. Johnson, I believe, was very unjustly taxed for personating particular men, but it will ever be the fate of them that write the humours of the town, especially in a foolish and vicious age. Yet, by extolling his way of writing, I would not insinuate to you that I can practice it, though I would if I could a thousand times sooner than any mans. And here I must take liberty to dissent from my particular friend, for whom I have a very great respect and whose writings I extreamly admire; and though I will not say his is the best way of writing, yet I am sure that his manner of writing it is much the best that ever was His verse is smoother and deeper, his thoughts more quick and surprising, his raptures more mettled and higher. And those who shall go about to imitate him will be found to flutter and make a noise, but never rise. Yet, after all this, I cannot think it impudence in him or any man to imitate Mr. Johnson, whom he confesses to have fewer failings than all the English poets, which implies he was the most perfect and best poet; and why should not we endeavour to imitate

him? because we cannot arrive at his excellence? If Mr. Johnson be the most faultless poet, I am so far from thinking it impudence to endeavour to imitate him that it would rather, in my opinion, seem impudence in me not to do it. I cannot be of their opinion who think he wanted wit Nor can I think to the writing of his humours, ... that wit was not required, but judgement; where, by the way, they speak as if judgement were a less thing than wit. But certainly it was meant otherwise by nature, who subjected wit to the government of judgement. ... The reason given by some why Jonson needed not wit in writing humor is because humor is the effect of observation, and observation the effect of judgement; but observation is as much necessary in all other plays as in comedies of humour. Besides, wit in the writer, I think, ... may be said to be the invention of remote and pleasant thoughts of what kind soever; and there is as much occasion for such imaginations in the writing of a curious coxcomb's part as in writing the greatest hero's. The most excellent Johnson put wit into the mouths of the meanest of his people, and, which is infinitely difficult, made it proper for 'em. And I once heard a person of the greatest wit and judgment of the age say that Bartholomew Fair, which consists most of low persons, is one of the wittiest plays in the world. ... I shall say no more but that the humours (in the Humourists) are new."

Not to be placated by his cooperation with Dryden and Crowne in assailing Settle's Empress of Morocco (1674), or by Dryden's compliment in the Epistle Dedicatory to Aureng-

Zebe (1676)[1], Shadwell in the prologue, epistle dedicatory, and epilogue to the Virtuoso, published in the same year, not only refers scornfully to Aureng-Zebe but also shows his envy of the laureate. The following lines from the Prologue are self-explanatory:

"You came with such an eager appetite
To a late play, which gave so great delight;
Our poet fears, that by so rich a treat,
Your palates are become too delicate.
Yet since y'have had rhyme for a relishing bit,
To give a better taste to comick wit.
But this requires expence of time and pains
Too great, alas, for poets slender gains."

With this should be compared the following from the Epistle Dedicatory: "Nor do I hear of any profest enemies to the play, but some women, and some men of feminine understandings, who like slight plays onely, that represent a little tattle sort of conversation, like their own; but true humor is not liked or understood by them. But the same people, to my great comfort, damn all Mr. Johnsons plays, who was incomparably the best poet that ever was, or, I believe that ever will be That there are a great many faults in the conduct of this play, I am not ignorant; (but I, having no pension but from the theatre, which is either unwilling or unable to reward a man sufficiently for so much pains as correct comedies require) cannot allot my whole time to the writing of plays,but am forced to mind some other business of advantage.

[1]- "Some of my contemporaries, ~~even in my~~ own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy."

(Had I as much money and as much time for it) I might perhaps write as correct a comedy as any of my contemporaries."

Not content with this, Shadwell takes a final fling in his Epilogue:

"But of these ladies he despairs to -day,
Who love a dull romantick whining play;
Where poor frail woman's made a Deity,
With senseless amorous idolatry;
And sniveling heroes sigh, and pine, and cry.
Though singly they beat armies, and huff kings,
Rant at the gods, and do impossible things,
Though they can laugh at danger, blood, and wounds;
(swoons.
Yet if the dame once chides, the milk-sop heroe
These doughty things, no manners have nor wit;
We ne'er saw Hero fit to drink with yet.
But hold, I hear some say among the rest,
This play is not well bred, nor yet well drest;
Such plays the women's poets can write best.

In 1678 appeared Shadwell's True Widow, with a prologue, strange to say, by Dryden, a fact which indicates that Dryden did not allow critical nor even private divergence to interfere with his professional business of writing prologues. Yet there seems to be a little irony in these lines of that prologue:

"Meantime poor wit prohibited must lye,
As if 'twere made some French commodity.
Fools you will have and raised at vast expence."

Moreover, as Scott has pointed out[1], "it is remarkable that, though Dryden writes the Prologue, the piece contains a sly hit at him. Maggot (Young Maggot), finding himself married to a portionless jilt, says,"I must e'en write for the play-house; I may get the reversion of the poet-laureate's place."[2] This, however, might be only meant as a good-humoured pleasantry among friends."

However this was meant, there is no doubt of the intention of the Medal of John Bayes (1681), nor does it seem at all doubtful that the bitterness of that poem was due just as much to literary rivalry as to differences in church and party. Some of the lines from Macflecknoe, Dryden's famous satire and answer to the Medal of John Bayes, are perhaps worth citing here in relation to Shadwell's imitation of Jonson:

"Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name;
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part.
.....
This is thy province, this thy wonderous way,
New humours to invent for each new play.
This is that boasted bias of thy mind
By which one way to dulness 'tis inclined.
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And, in all changes that way bends the will
Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
Of likeness."

1-Dryden:Vol.X, p.344. 2-Act V.

A strange illustration of the power of matter over mind, if what Dryden alleges is true, that Shadwell imitated Jonson's method of writing because of his own similarity in size! In the four lines preceding that reference, Dryden is alluding to some lines from the epilogue of the Humourists.[1]

Nor was Dryden satisfied with this. His description of Shadwell as Og, in the second part of Absalom and Achitophel, is famous. Further slurring references to Shadwell are to be found in a "Prologue to the University of Oxford, spoken at the acting of the Silent Woman"; in the "Prologue to the King and Queen upon the union of the two companies, in 1686";[2] and in a prologue to Albumazar (1688?) which includes this reference to Shadwell's attainment of the laureateship:

"Faith, if you have such country Toms[3] abroad,
'Tis time for all true men to leave that road.
.....
Such men in poetry may claim some part;
They have the license, though they want the art
And might, where theft was praised for laureates stand,
Poets, not of the head, but of the hand."

From 1681, the date of the Lancashire Witches, till 1688, the date of the Squire of Alsatia and of the beginning of Shadwell's career as laureate--the year of the Revolution--Shadwell had no plays produced. In the Epistle Dedicatory to Bury Fair (1689) he thus explains his long silence: "I never could recant, in the worst of times, when my ruine was design'd, and my life was sought, and for near ten years I was kept from the

1-see p. 42. 2"Nodull fat fool shammed on the stage for humour".
3-Country Toms = highwaymen. Shadwell's first name is Thomas.

exercise of that profession which had afforded me a comfortable subsistence." His failure to write, however, though mainly due to politics, must have also been due to the laughter aroused by Macflecknoe and the declining desire for 'humour' plays- Shadwell, nevertheless, it should be stated, wrote four plays, all 'humourous' after 1688. Rage as he might, 'wit' and 'repartee' were what the frivolous, profligate set of courtiers wished for dramatic fare; and that critic who was most attentive to their wants found his critical theories accepted. The comedy of 'humour' had definitely given way to the comedy of 'wit'.

Just how much effect the critical controversy between Dryden and Shadwell had on the outcome of the conflict between the comedy of 'humour' and the comedy of 'wit' it is impossible to state. I have already quoted Spingarn's statement that in the early stages of the controversy between Dryden and Shadwell is to be found the crisis of the conflict which marked the transition from the comedy of Jonson to the comedy of Molière. It is indubitable, too, that the comedy of 'humours' had little chance of establishing itself after the principal champion of that comedy had provoked Macflecknoe, and had, in so doing, drawn upon himself ridicule and ignominy. Yet, after all, Dryden's victory over Shadwell was in all probability due not more to Dryden's superior argument or superior satiric powers, than to the spirit of the time, an age of two ruling passions,-the desire to carry on amorous intrigue, the desire to be witty. Since these two passions are the chief motivating elements in the comedy of wit, the victory of the comedy of 'wit' over the comedy of 'humour' is to be attributed as much to the influence of the spirit of the age as to the critical stand taken by Dryden.

THE INFLUENCE OF BEN JONSON ON RESTORATION DRAMA

We should now be ready to believe, that in spite of the evident liking for Jonsonian performances between 1660 and 1682, in spite of much critical approval, Jonsonian influence, if felt at all in Restoration drama, was to be felt in most cases only slightly. We have seen how slight was the influence on Dryden: the taking over of an incident, the introductory character-sketch, a 'humourous' character or two, the use of Jonsonian authority to justify the use of rhymed couplets in the drama. Only one man, Shadwell, is strongly influenced by Jonson. Of little account, again, is the Jonsonian influence on Wilson, Afra Behn, Killigrew, Tate, and Etheredge.

Shadwell's sincerity in following Jonson has sometimes been impugned. The Pepys quotation already given (p.5), which speaks of him as being "big with admiration" of the Silent Woman, and the warmth of his comments in prologues, epilogues, epistles dedicatory, and prefaces seems to me sufficient indication of Shadwell's honesty, here at least. Though, of course, Shadwell could not reproduce Jonson's classical poise, and was far inferior to him in plot-construction and in the writing of dialogue, he does succeed in a fair imitation of Jonson's 'humours', in a similar faithful reproduction of contemporary life, and in such easily attained kinds of imitation as learned marginal notes and the putting of character-sketches in the dramatis personae.

'Humours' appear in the following Shadwell plays: Sullen Lovers, Humourists, Virtuoso, Epsom Wells, True Widow,

Lancashire Witches, Woman Captain, Squire of Alsatia, Bury Fair, Amorous Bigot, Scowrers, and Volunteers. Another Jonsonian trait, dramatis personae in the form of character-sketches, is to be found in almost all these plays. The following, from the Sullen Lovers, is typical:

"Sir Positive At-All, a foolish knight, that pretends to understand everything in the world, and will suffer no man to understand anything in his company; so foolishly positive, that he will never be convinced of an error, though never so gross.

Ninny, a conceited poet, always troubling men with impertinent discourses of poetry, and the repetition of his own verses; in all his discourse he uses such affected words that 'tis as bad as the canting of a gipsy."

It is perhaps worth mentioning here that Pepys saw the Sullen Lovers no less than seven times. On May 1, 1668 he writes that it has many good humours in it", but that it is "tedious"; on May 5 he likes it because the play is "cried up more than yesterday" —by Sir Positive At-All and Woodcock were meant, so ran the talk (evidently with justice) Sir Robert Howard and Lord St. John; on June 24 it is "a pretty good play." Thus popularity breeds respect.

Shadwell, like Dryden, makes his personages give character-sketches of the others in the play. See, for example, the conversation between Bellamour, Carlos, and Stanmore in Act I, Scene 1 of A True Widow. Perhaps the best example is the following from Bury Fair; Wildish is talking with his valet:

"Valet. But to give you an example of the wit and breeding of our town, there is the Lady Fantast and her daughter.

Wildish. The most perpetual, impertinent, prattling, conceited jades that ever plagued mankind.

Valet. Mercy on me! ... Is not the young lady a beauty too?

Wildish. I must confess God has given her a good face, but by her most insupportable affectation she screws it into twenty bad ones. . . .

Valet. I hope you grant Mr. Oldwit is a fine,facetious, witty old gentleman, my Lady Fantast's husband?

Wildish. Almost as arrant an ass as you are. He is a paltry old-fashioned wit and punner of the last age, that pretends to have been one of Ben Jonson's sons, and to have seen plays at the Black-Friar.

Valet. . . I warrant you will not allow Sir Humphrey Noddy to be a wit and fine gentleman.

Wildish. A blunt, noisy, laughing, roaring, drinking fellow, as troublesome as a monkey and as witless as a jack-daw; he is, at best, but a wag.

Valet. What think you of Mr. Trim?

Wildish. . . . He is a most complete and finished fop. Nature has not been negligent, nor art been idle, in his composition. He is very wise, reserved, full of forms, and empty of substance; all ceremony and no sense; more troublesomely ill-bred with his formality than a high-shoed peasant with his roughness. Sir Noddy and he are two excellent fops in consort."

Perhaps because of Shadwell's lack of wit, and his consequent necessity of finding material in the life about him, his plays are the best source, with the exception of Pepys, for an exact account of London in the last part of the seventeenth century. Bury Fair suggests Bartholomew Fair, of course; and the Scowrers contains would-be bullies, who suggest Castril, and, like some of the more pernicious types of the modern college student, have no respect for property-rights.

Lancashire Witches, finally, has learned marginal notes as sources for its display of witchcraft information which suggest similar acknowledgment of historical lore in Jonson.[1]

John Wilson was one of Ben Jonson's 'sons' who survived into Restoration times. For some reason his plays were not popular, and hence had little effect on the drama of the time. In the Author to the Reader, which precedes his Cheats (1662)— the first example of Jonsonian comedy after 1660— are to be found his belief in the purpose of comedy and an

1-Note also the following Jonsonian allusions in Shadwell:
Epsom Wells: Act V, Sc.1. "I have not only married a Londoner, ... but the most audacious of her sex, a Doll Common."
Lancashire Witches: To the Reader: "For my part, I am (about witches) (as it is said of Surly in the Alchemist, somewhat costive of belief."
The Scowrers: Act IV, Sc.1: "He'll be worse to us two (i.e. play the tyrant) than Doll Common to Face and Subtle.
Shadwell also acknowledges his indebtedness to Jonson for two lines in the Lancashire Witches, which he slightly alters from two in the Sad Shepherd, Act II, Sc.2.

indication that he believes himself writing 'humour' comedy. "To any man who shall say such or such humours have either been in the town before, or formerly writ upon, give me leave to offer this to the first, that comedy either is or should be the true picture of virtue or vice, yet so drawn as to show a man how to follow the one and avoid the other; in doing which if I had fram'd anything that was not, I had not only belied the town, but wrong'd myself. As to the second, ... I hope, if I may have border'd upon anyone that has gone before, I am thus far excusable that I have purposely declined both his manner and his way. To be short, were there nothing more, even this were enough, that there is hardly anything left to write upon but what either the ancients or the moderns have some way or other touch'd on. Did not ... Erasmus take his Alcumistica from Chaucer's Canon Yeoman's Tale? And Ben Jonson his more happy Alchymist from both?"

The Cheats itself has quack astrologers whom Jonson's alchemists probably suggested, and its title, moreover, indicates its typically Jonsonian plot-construction. But I cannot agree that the "Cheats is preeminently a 'humour comedy'", or for that matter that in the Projectors— though it is suggested doubtless by the Devil is am Ass— "the very names of the characters reveal the habit which Jonson popularized in 'humour comedy'"[1]. Unfortunately the names of the dramatis personae

1-Nettleton: English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, pp.38, 39.

in Restoration drama or elsewhere are no definite indication of a Jonson influence strong enough to result in 'humours'. The independence of Wilson's attitude—which Professor Nettleton acknowledges, and which the quotation from the prologue given indicates—is so strong that except for Scruple in the Cheats, who is 'humourous' in the fact that he seems to believe his own 'casuistry', there is no character so controlled by a 'ruling passion' as to be pronouncedly Jonsonian or at least 'humorous'. We can, however, say with a little more assurance that Belphegor, or the Marriage of the Devil, which tells of the return of a devil to the earth, may have seemed a suitable subject to Wilson because of the similar incident in the Devil is an Ass, though Wilson declares that he drew his story from either Machiavelli or Straparola.

Whatever the extent of the Jonsonian influence on Wilson, that on Mrs. Afra Behn is so small that the statement of Edmund Gosse in the Dictionary of National Biography[1] that she made "extraordinary efforts" in the Town Fop (1677) "to revive the peculiar manner of Ben Jonson, which had quite gone out of fashion", seems unsupported by any more evidence than the fact that the play contains a lewd fool[2] who is victimized by two bullies and the fact that these lines occur in the Prologue:

"Yet here's
But a plain story, that will give a taste
Of what your grandsires lov'd i'the age that's past."

1-Vol.II, p.130. 2-Cf. in any case Middleton's Mad World My Masters, a play with characters like those of the Town Fop.

For any Jonsonian influence, Mrs. Behn's sources are as likely to be responsible as Mrs. Behn herself, since Afra saw to it that she wrote plays which would bring her money and disturbed herself not at all about theories of dramatic art. Nevertheless the Roundheads (1682) although borrowed, according to Langbaine from Tateham's Rump, has this much connection with Jonson that a lascivious hypocrite in the play is called Ananias, which is perhaps a reminiscence of the Alchemist. In the first part of the Rover (1677) is the following introductory character-sketch[1] the whole play, by the way, is sprinkled with the word 'humour':

"Willmore. Prithee what humour is he of that you wish him so well?

Belvile. Why, of an English Elder Brother's humour, educated in a nursery, with a maid to tend him till fifteen, and lies with his grand-mother till he's of age: one that knows no pleasure beyond riding to the next fair, or riding up to London with his right worshipful father in Parliament time; wearing gay cloathes, or making honourable love to his lady mother's landry-maid: gets drunk at a hunting-match , and ten to one then gives some proofs of his prowess."

The Rover, however,"is taken entire from two unacted comedies of Thomas Killigrew, entitled Thomaso the Wanderer,"[2] (published 1664); and this, according to Langbaine[3] copies its "very words ;...from Johnson's Fox, where

1- Act I, Sc. 2. 2-Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII, p.160. 3- Langbaine, pp.313, 314.

Vulpone personates Scoto of Mantua: as the reader will see by comparing Act 4. Sc.2. of this play, with that of the Fox, Act 2. Sc. 2. " Consequently the indebtedness of Mrs. Behn to Jonson here, is pretty indirect.

A similar kind of influence is alleged by Langbaine[1] in regard to Tate's Cuckold's Haven:"This play is borrow'd from Johnson's Eastward Hoe and Devil is an Ass."

A final bit of Jonsonian influence is found in Etheredge. Four years previous to Dryden's proclamation of his adherence to the comedy of 'wit' and 'repartee', Etheredge, in the Prologue to Love in a Tub, (1664) wrote as follows:

"Wit has, like painting, had her happy flights
And in peculiar ages reached her heights,
Though now declined: yet, could some able pen,
Match Fletcher's nature, or the art of Ben,
The old and graver sort would scarce allow
These plays were good, because we writ them now.
Our author, therefore, begs you would forget
Most reverent judges, the records of wit;
And only think about the modern way
Of writing, whilst you're censuring his play."

In that play, however, "One thread of the comic plot, the attempts of Palmer and Wheedle to swindle Cully, is an intrigue of Jonsonian comedy." [2]

1-p.501. 2-The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy, p.63. D. H. Miles.

Though in agreement with this statement, I cannot agree with the statement made by Professor Nettleton in regard to the nature of the Jonsonian influence on Wycherley. That Jonsonian influence is there, I have little doubt, but that it is so obvious and palpable as Professor Nettleton implies, seems to me doubtful. "The dramatis personae, he says, "are for the most part Jonsonian 'humour characters'. Ranger, Dapperwit, Alderman Gripe, and Lady Flippant are obviously significant names, and, for that matter, it is hardly necessary to define Mrs. Joyner as 'a Match-maker' or Mrs. Cross-bite as 'an old cheating jill'".[1] The list of characters in the dramatis personae, it is true, follows the type of character-sketch much used by Jonson, but except for the lustful and greedy Gripe, I find it hard to see anything distinctively Jonsonian in the characters themselves. Ranger, Dapperwit, and Lady Flippant are stock figures of Restoration drama, puppets to carry on amorous intrigue and to speak 'wit' and 'repartee'.

Much closer to Jonson is Congreve in his first play, the Old Bachelor. Nor is this surprising in a man who had in the idea revealed in a letter to Dennis:[2] "Tho' I remember Ben. Johnson, in his comedy of Cynthia's Revels, makes a well, which he there calls the fountain of self-love, to be the source of many entertaining and ridiculous humours; I am of opinion, that something very comical and new might be brought upon the stage from a fiction of the like nature." In the Old Bachelor, there-

1-English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, p.78, G. H. Nettleton. 2-Familiar Letters, Vol.I, p.167.

fore, we are not startled to find Bluffe, Sharper, and Wittol, [1]"who might have stepped out from Ben Jonson's comedy of humours." When Bluffe says:"Sir, I honour you; I understand you love fighting, I reverence a man that loves fighting, sir, I kiss your hilts", you recognize the authentic accent of Bobadill. Even Fondlewife, that "kind of mongrel zealot" owes less to life than to Zeal-of-the-land Busy." But the rest of Congreve's characters in this play and most if not all the characters in his other comedies conform rather to that design which he acknowledges in the dedication of the Way of the World, "characters which should appear ridiculous, not so much through a natural folly (which is incorrigible, and therefore not proper for the stage) as through an affected wit; a wit, which at the same time that it is affected, is also false."

Now in characters built on this plan there is, I believe, something Jonsonian, something which can perhaps be most clearly arrived at by a comparison of the ideas of humour advanced by Jonson, by Shadwell, by Dryden, and by Congreve.

The definitions given by the four men follow:

Jonson.[2]

Now thus far
It may, by metaphor, apply itself
Unto the general disposition:
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his effects, his spirits, and his powers

1-Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII,p.167.

2-Induction: Every Man out of his Humour.

In their confluctions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour."

Shadwell.[1] " A humour is the bias of the mind
By which with violence 'tis one way inclined.
It makes our actions lean on one side still,
And in all changes that way bends the will."

Dryden.[2] "By humour is meant some extravagant habit, passion, or affectation, particular to some one person, by the oddness of which, he is immediately distinguished from the rest of men, which being lively and naturally represented, most frequently begets that malicious pleasure in the audience which is testified by laughter."

Congreve.[3] "Humour is neither wit, nor folly, nor personal defect, nor affectation, nor habit— I take it to be a singular and unavoidable manner of doing or saying any thing, peculiar and natural to one man only, by which his speech and actions are distinguished from those of other men."

The difference and agreement in Dryden's and Congreve's opinions should be evident. In the point in which both agree, the idea that 'humour' is peculiar to one man, they differ with Shadwell, who says:[4] "If a man should bring such a humor upon the stage (if there be such a humour in the world) as onely belongs

1-Epilogue: The Humourists. 2-Essay of Dramatick Poesy. 3-Letter to Mr. Dennis: Concerning Humour in Comedy. 4-Preface to the Humourists.

to one or two persons, it would not be understood by the audience, but would be thought, for the singularity of it, wholly unnatural, and would be no jest to them neither."

The words"saying it" in Congreve's definition should be compared, finally, with this from Dryden: "Humor is the ridiculous extravagance of conversation[1], wherein one man differs from all others."

The question now presents itself: how do these quotations help me in my attempt to show that there is in Restoration comedy, especially in the comedy of Wycherley and Congreve, something Jonsonian, not to be hastily assumed from the names of the characters, but Jonsonian nevertheless?

Let us consider the following quotation from Richard Garnett's Age of Dryden[2]: "Possibly the unsatisfactory position which writers of so much wit and sense thus came to occupy may be partly accounted for by the influence of Ben Jonson. We have seen Dryden almost hesitating to avow his preference for Shakespeare to Jonson, we shall now see that Butler has no hesitation in asserting the superiority of Jonson as an obvious thing; nor could it well be otherwise in so essentially prosaic an age. This implies the triumph of the comedy of types over the comedy of nature. Jonson, like Menander, impersonates particular characteristics, or situations in life; Shakespeare paints human nature as large as it really is. We have seen how the exhibition of these so-called 'humours' forms the staple

1-Essay of Dramatick Poesy.2-pp.131, 132.

of the comedy of Shadwell. The handling of Congreve and his associates, who had the example of Molière before them, is far superior, but the principle is at bottom the same. A characteristic is incarnated in a personage, and often indicated by his very name. Instead of the names bestowed by fancy, or borrowed from romance, the Benedicts, Imogens, Rosalinds, Mirandas, we have Witwoulds, Maskwells, Millamants, and Gibbets. Each character being thus more or less conventional, the tout ensemble is necessarily conventional too."

Conventional! that, it seems to me, is the key-word to the Jonsonian element in Wycherley and Congreve. These names indicate two 'humours', two main sorts of character: those who would be witty— note Dryden's and Congreve's belief in the 'humour' of speech — and those who would carry on amorous intrigue. In general, the comedy of Wycherley and Congreve has variants on these two 'humours' and most often these 'humours' in combination. When there are only two kinds of characters, it is inevitable that they should be conventional. Conventional characters, moreover, are almost certain to result when dramatists are more interested in making all their characters, even fools, talk wittily than they are in drawing character. As a result of being conventional, however, these types lose those characteristics which would enable us to recognize them, either at once or even after much closer scrutiny, as 'humours'. Yet 'humours' in inception, after all, I believe they are.

The greatest writer of comedy, Molière, shows in the seventeenth century that kind of character-drawing, which

though exemplified by Shakespeare and other Elizabethans, was not to become the model to be aimed at in the drawing of character until the time of Joseph Andrews, a joining of the comedy of types to the comedy of individuals. Jonson's characters, alive though they may be on the stage, are certainly not in many cases plausible human beings: perhaps only in the minor characters of Bartholomew Fair are we close to what Garnett calls the comedy of 'nature'. Congreve's characters, on the other hand, "ridiculous not so much through a natural folly as through an affected wit", gave occasion to Lamb's famous paradox. [1] Yet only through the development of Jonson's 'humours', so developed, indeed, as to become almost unrecognizable, was effected the final change to the modern idea of 'humour' and of character.

1-"The Fainalls and the Mirabels, the Dorimants and the Lady Touchwoods, in their own sphere, do not offend my moral sense; in fact they do not appeal to it at all. They seem engaged in their proper element. They break through no laws, or conscious restraints. They know of none. They have got out of Christendom into the land—what shall I call it?— of cuckoldry— the Utopia of gallantry, where pleasure is duty, and the manners perfect freedom." —On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century.

CONCLUSION

Other results of Jonson's influence between 1660 and 1670 are of little importance. We have seen that performances of Jonson's plays were frequent between 1660 and 1682; that during the whole period critics praised Jonson lavishly. Yet we have seen also that as soon as the English dramatists, by imitation of French and Spanish models, had provided a sufficient number of comedies of wit and intrigue, the Jonsonian comedy of 'humours' lost its popularity. Only one imitator, Shadwell, was consistent in his following of Jonsonian principles; and even he produced no plays for seven years (1681-1688) in the midst of his career, partly because of politics, partly also because of the obloquy occasioned by Macflecknoe, the culmination of the controversy both political and literary between Dryden and Shadwell. The literary side of this controversy is interesting and important since in the prologues, epilogues, and prefaces where the controversy is to be traced, we see the crisis of the conflict between the comedy of 'humour' and the comedy of 'wit' and 'repartee'. Though no other dramatist is to be found who is powerfully affected by Jonson, plays by others than Shadwell contain character-sketches, humours, incident, and methods of plot-construction which are Jonsonian in origin. It is to be especially noted that some of these instances occur in the first plays of Etheredge, Dryden, Wycherley, and Congreve,—dramatists who in their later plays wrote comedy of almost unmixed wit and intrigue. The only Jonsonian element in their later plays, is, we have

seen, a conception of character, which, though 'humourous'to begin with, results in conventional characters almost impossible to recognize as Jonsonian. The conventionality of these characters was a consequence of the fact that Restoration playwrights were more interested in being witty than in portraying character, and of the fact that there are in these plays hardly more than two kinds of characters, those who would be witty and those who would carry on amorous intrigue. Finally, we have tried to show the importance of the change in the style of comedy to any one interested in the development of character-portrayal either in the drama or in the novel. For the change from the comedy of 'humour' to the comedy of 'wit' and 'repartee' involved also a change in the meaning of the word 'humour' which affected profoundly the principles of character-drawing. And bothsthese changes were necessary before the modern conception of humor and the modern principles of character-drawing were first exemplified by Fielding's Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones.

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